

**SEISMIC HAZARD ZONE REPORT FOR THE  
VAN NUYS 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE,  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

**1997**



**DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION**  
*Division of Mines and Geology*

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SEISMIC HAZARD ZONE REPORT 08

**SEISMIC HAZARD ZONE REPORT FOR THE  
VAN NUYS 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE,  
LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the methods and sources of information used to prepare the Seismic Hazard Zone Map for the Van Nuys 7.5-minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California. The map displays the boundaries of Zones of Required Investigation for liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslides over an area of approximately 62 square miles at a scale of 1 inch = 2,000 feet.

The Van Nuys Quadrangle includes part of the central and eastern San Fernando Valley about 14 miles northwest of the Los Angeles Civic Center. Parts of the City of Los Angeles communities of Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Studio City, and North Hollywood are in the quadrangle. The northern three fourths of the quadrangle consists of the gently sloping to flat-lying San Fernando Valley floor. The southern one fourth consists of hillside terrain cut by north-trending canyons that characterizes the northern slope of the Santa Monica Mountains. Access to the uplands is by numerous narrow residential streets and broader boulevards that follow canyons and ridgecrests between Ventura Boulevard on the north and Mulholland Drive on the south. Residential and commercial development is concentrated in the flat-lying valley area. Hillside residential development began after World War II and continues at present. Other land uses include Sepulveda Dam Flood Control and Recreational Area and gravel pit operations located in Tujunga Wash.

The map is prepared by employing geographic information system (GIS) technology, which allows the manipulation of three-dimensional data. Information considered includes topography, surface and subsurface geology, borehole data, historical ground-water levels, existing landslide features, slope gradient, rock-strength measurements, geologic structure, and probabilistic earthquake shaking estimates. The shaking inputs are based upon probabilistic seismic hazard maps that depict peak ground acceleration, mode magnitude, and mode distance with a 10% probability of exceedance in 50 years.

The liquefaction zone crosses the entire Van Nuys Quadrangle. It extends from the base of the mountains northward for about 3 ½ miles, essentially from south of Ventura Boulevard to just north of Victory Boulevard. It covers about one third of the quadrangle. The presence of rocks that are highly susceptible to landsliding and deep dissection of the hillsides on the northern slope of the Santa Monica Mountains contribute to an earthquake-induced landslide zone that covers about 5 percent of the quadrangle. However, since most of the quadrangle consists of the San Fernando Valley floor the landslide zone is actually about 40 percent of the hillside terrain in the Van Nuys Quadrangle.

### How to view or obtain the map

Seismic Hazard Zone Maps, Seismic Hazard Zone Reports and additional information on seismic hazard zone mapping in California are available on the Division of Mines and Geology's Internet page: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS/index.htm>

Paper copies of Official Seismic Hazard Zone Maps, released by DMG, which depict zones of required investigation for liquefaction and/or earthquake-induced landslides, are available for purchase from:

BPS Reprographic Services  
945 Bryant Street  
San Francisco, California 94105  
(415) 512-6550

Seismic Hazard Zone Reports (SHZR) summarize the development of the hazard zone map for each area and contain background documentation for use by site investigators and local government reviewers. These reports are available for reference at DMG offices in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. **NOTE: The reports are not available through BPS Reprographic Services.**

# INTRODUCTION

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (the Act) of 1990 (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.8, Division 2) directs the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) to delineate seismic hazard zones. The purpose of the Act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use the seismic hazard zone maps in their land-use planning and permitting processes. They must withhold development permits for a site within a zone until the geologic and soil conditions of the project site are investigated and appropriate mitigation measures, if any, are incorporated into development plans. The Act also requires sellers (and their agents) of real property within a mapped hazard zone to disclose at the time of sale that the property lies within such a zone. Evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazards are to be conducted under guidelines established by the California State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 1997; also available on the Internet at <http://gmw.consrv.ca.gov/shmp/webdocs/sp117.pdf>).

The Act also directs SMGB to appoint and consult with the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act Advisory Committee (SHMAAC) in developing criteria for the preparation of the seismic hazard zone maps. SHMAAC consists of geologists, seismologists, civil and structural engineers, representatives of city and county governments, the state insurance commissioner and the insurance industry. In 1991 SMGB adopted initial criteria for delineating seismic hazard zones to promote uniform and effective statewide implementation of the Act. These initial criteria provide detailed standards for mapping regional liquefaction hazards. They also directed DMG to develop a set of probabilistic seismic maps for California and to research methods that might be appropriate for mapping earthquake-induced landslide hazards.

In 1996, working groups established by SHMAAC reviewed the prototype maps and the techniques used to create them. The reviews resulted in recommendations that 1) the process for zoning liquefaction hazards remain unchanged and 2) earthquake-induced landslide zones be delineated using a modified Newmark analysis.

This Seismic Hazard Zone Report summarizes the development of the hazard zone map. The process of zoning for liquefaction uses a combination of Quaternary geologic mapping, historical ground-water information, and subsurface geotechnical data. The process for zoning earthquake-induced landslides incorporates earthquake loading, existing landslide features, slope gradient, rock strength, and geologic structure. Probabilistic seismic hazard maps, which are the underpinning for delineating seismic hazard zones, have been prepared for peak ground acceleration, mode magnitude, and mode distance with a 10% probability of exceedance in 50 years (Petersen and others, 1996) in accordance with the mapping criteria.

This report summarizes seismic hazard zone mapping for potentially liquefiable soils and earthquake-induced landslides in the Van Nuys 7.5-minute Quadrangle.

# **SECTION 1**

## **LIQUEFACTION EVALUATION REPORT**

### **Liquefaction Zones in the Van Nuys 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California**

**By**  
**Christopher J. Wills and Allan G. Barrows**

**California Department of Conservation  
Division of Mines and Geology**

#### **PURPOSE**

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (the Act) of 1990 (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.8, Division 2) directs the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) to delineate Seismic Hazard Zones. The purpose of the Act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps developed by DMG in their land-use planning and permitting processes. The Act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations be performed prior to permitting most urban development projects within seismic hazard zones. Evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazards are to be conducted under guidelines adopted by the California State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 1997; also available on the Internet at <http://gmw.consrv.ca.gov/shmp/webdocs/sp117.pdf>).

This section of the evaluation report summarizes seismic hazard zone mapping for potentially liquefiable soils in the Van Nuys 7.5-minute Quadrangle. This section, along with Section 2 (addressing earthquake-induced landslides), and Section 3 (addressing potential ground shaking), form a report that is one of a series that summarizes production of similar seismic hazard zone maps within the state (Smith, 1996).

Additional information on seismic hazards zone mapping in California is on DMG's Internet web page: <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS/index.htm>

## **BACKGROUND**

Liquefaction-induced ground failure historically has been a major cause of earthquake damage in southern California. During the 1971 San Fernando and 1994 Northridge earthquakes, significant damage to roads, utility pipelines, buildings, and other structures in the Los Angeles area was caused by liquefaction-induced ground displacement.

Localities most susceptible to liquefaction-induced damage are underlain by loose, water-saturated, granular sediment within 40 feet of the ground surface. These geological and ground-water conditions exist in parts of southern California, most notably in some densely populated valley regions and alluviated floodplains. In addition, the potential for strong earthquake ground shaking is high because of the many nearby active faults. The combination of these factors constitutes a significant seismic hazard in the southern California region in general, including areas in the Van Nuys Quadrangle.

## **METHODS SUMMARY**

Characterization of liquefaction hazard presented in this report requires preparation of maps that delineate areas underlain by potentially liquefiable sediment. The following were collected or generated for this evaluation:

- Existing geologic maps were used to provide an accurate representation of the spatial distribution of Quaternary deposits in the study area. Geologic units that generally are susceptible to liquefaction include late Quaternary alluvial and fluvial sedimentary deposits and artificial fill
- Construction of shallow ground-water maps showing the historically highest known ground-water levels
- Quantitative analysis of geotechnical data to evaluate liquefaction potential of deposits
- Information on potential ground shaking intensity based on DMG probabilistic shaking maps

The data collected for this evaluation were processed into a series of geographic information system (GIS) layers using commercially available software. The liquefaction zone map was derived from a synthesis of these data and according to criteria adopted by the State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 2000).

## SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Evaluation for potentially liquefiable soils generally is confined to areas covered by Quaternary (less than about 1.6 million years) sedimentary deposits. Such areas consist mainly of alluviated valleys, floodplains, and canyon regions. DMG's liquefaction hazard evaluations are based on information on earthquake ground shaking, surface and subsurface lithology, geotechnical soil properties, and ground-water depth, which is gathered from various sources. Although selection of data used in this evaluation was rigorous, the quality of the data used varies. The State of California and the Department of Conservation make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of the data obtained from outside sources.

Liquefaction zone maps are intended to prompt more detailed, site-specific geotechnical investigations, as required by the Act. As such, liquefaction zone maps identify areas where the potential for liquefaction is relatively high. They do not predict the amount or direction of liquefaction-related ground displacements, or the amount of damage to facilities that may result from liquefaction. Factors that control liquefaction-induced ground failure are the extent, depth, density, and thickness of liquefiable materials, depth to ground water, rate of drainage, slope gradient, proximity to free faces, and intensity and duration of ground shaking. These factors must be evaluated on a site-specific basis to assess the potential for ground failure at any given project site.

Information developed in the study is presented in two parts: physiographic, geologic, and hydrologic conditions in PART I, and liquefaction and zoning evaluations in PART II.

## PART I

### PHYSIOGRAPHY

#### Study Area Location and Physiography

The Van Nuys Quadrangle covers an area of about 62 square miles in western Los Angeles County. The Civic Center in the Los Angeles suburb of Van Nuys, near the center of the Van Nuys Quadrangle, lies about 14.5 miles northwest of the Los Angeles Civic Center. Local communities, all parts of the City of Los Angeles, that lie within the quadrangle include: Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, North Hollywood, Panorama City, Sepulveda, and Sun Valley. The Van Nuys Airport and the Sepulveda Dam Recreation (and flood control) Area along the Los Angeles River, also lie within the quadrangle. The San Fernando Valley floor covers most of the quadrangle, although, south of U.S. Highway 101 (Ventura Freeway), the northern slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains, which are dissected by numerous north-trending canyons, rise toward the mountain crest that lies along the southern border of the map area.



## **GEOLOGY**

### **Structural and Depositional Setting**

Geologically, the San Fernando Valley is an east-trending structural trough within the Transverse Ranges geologic province of southern California. The mountains that bound it to the north and south are actively deforming anticlinal ranges bounded on their south sides by thrust faults. As these ranges have risen and been deformed, the San Fernando Valley has subsided and filled with sediment.

The eastern portion of the valley, including most of the Van Nuys Quadrangle, has received sediment from Pacoima and Tujunga washes. These washes are associated with large river systems that have their sources in the steep, rugged San Gabriel Mountains, which are comprised of crystalline bedrock. The rivers have deposited a broad alluvial fan composed of sand, silt, and gravel that blankets most of the Van Nuys Quadrangle. Except for local floodplain deposits associated with the Los Angeles River, the remainder of the San Fernando Valley, south of the Pacoima/Tujunga alluvial fan, is covered by small alluvial fans, which have been deposited by local streams that drain the slopes underlain by marine sedimentary rocks of the Santa Monica Mountains.

### **Surficial Geology**

Geologic units that generally are susceptible to liquefaction include late Quaternary alluvial and fluvial sedimentary deposits and artificial fill. Late Quaternary geologic units in the San Fernando Valley area were completely re-mapped for this study and a concurrent study by engineering geologist Chris Hitchcock of William Lettis and Associates (Hitchcock and Wills, 1998; 2000). Lettis and Associates received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study the activity of the Northridge Hills uplift. As part of the research for this study, Hitchcock mapped Quaternary surficial units by interpreting their geomorphic expression on aerial photographs and topographic maps. The primary source for this work was 1938 aerial photographs taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). His interpretations were checked and extended for this study using 1952 USDA aerial photos, 1920's topographic maps and subsurface data. The resulting map (Hitchcock and Wills, 2000) represents a cooperative effort to depict the Quaternary geology of the San Fernando Valley combining surficial geomorphic mapping and information about subsurface soils engineering properties. The portion of this map that covers the Van Nuys Quadrangle is reproduced as Plate 1.1.

In preparing the Quaternary geologic map for the San Fernando Valley, geologic maps prepared by Tinsley and others (1985), Yerkes and Campbell (1996), and Dibblee (1991a; 1991b) were referred to. We began with the map of Yerkes and Campbell (1996) as a file in the DMG geographic information system (GIS). The Quaternary geology portion of the Yerkes and Campbell (1996) map was compiled from Tinsley and others (1985). For this study, we did not review or revise the mapping of bedrock units by Yerkes and Campbell (1996), except at the contacts between bedrock and Quaternary units. Within the Quaternary units, the surficial mapping by Hitchcock and subsurface analysis by DMG were used to refine and substantially revise the mapping of Tinsley and

others (1985). Geologic units were defined based on geomorphic expression of Quaternary units (interpreted from aerial photographs and historic topographic maps) and subsurface characteristics of those units (based on borehole data compiled and evaluated by DMG). The nomenclature of the Southern California Areal Mapping Project (SCAMP) (Morton and Kennedy, 1989) was applied to all Quaternary units (Table 1.1).

	Alluvial fan deposits	alluvial valley deposits	
<b>Active</b>	Qf- active fan	Qa- active depositional basin	Holocene?
	Qw- active wash		
<b>Young</b>	Qyf2	Qyt	Pleistocene?
	Qyf1		
<b>Old</b>	Qof2	Qt	
	Qof1		
<b>Very old</b>	Qvof2	Qvoa2*	
		Qvoa1*	

\*may have been alluvial fan, depositional form not preserved

**Table 1.1. Units of the Southern California Areal Mapping Project (SCAMP) Nomenclature Used in the San Fernando Valley.**

The Quaternary geologic map (Plate 1.1) shows that the Van Nuys Quadrangle is largely covered by an alluvial fan that extends from north of the quadrangle to the Los Angeles River. The major sources of the sediment that make up this fan have been the river systems that culminate in Tujunga and Pacoima washes, both of which receive sediment from large regions in the San Gabriel Mountains. These river systems begin in high, rugged mountains composed of crystalline rocks. Periodic torrential rainfall and associated flooding characterize the drainage regimes of these washes. Sedimentation in the study area is primarily sand, silt, and gravel, the compositions of which reflects the crystalline rocks of the source area. The alluvial fan, referred to here as the Pacoima-Tujunga fan, has its head on the San Fernando and Sunland quadrangles, north of the present study area. The Los Angeles River, which flows from west to east across the southern part of the quadrangle, has contributed very little to the sedimentation of the basin.

The Pacoima/Tujunga alluvial fan in the Van Nuys and Canoga Park quadrangles can be subdivided based on relative ages of different alluvial fan surfaces formed on inactive alluvial fans. The oldest of these surfaces, mapped as Qof2, in the western Van Nuys and eastern Canoga Park quadrangles, appears to be cut off from its upstream source area by uplift of the Northridge Hills. Qof2 appears to form an alluvial fan within the larger fan with its apex near the Bull Creek gap in the Northridge Hills.

This fan surface may have been abandoned when continuing uplift of the Northridge Hills deflected the Pacoima Wash drainage to the east. Although this surface is older than any other part of the Pacoima/Tujunga fan, it may have formed in early to mid Holocene time.

Two levels of younger alluvium (Qyf1 and Qyf2) and two generations of active wash deposits (historic and pre-historic) can be distinguished on the Pacoima/Tujunga fan. (Plate 1.1). All of these units are dominantly composed of sand and silty sand with some gravel.

The oldest alluvial units in the San Fernando Valley are found within the Northridge Hills and on the south flank of the Santa Susana Mountains. The southeast end of the Northridge Hills extends into the northwest corner of the Van Nuys Quadrangle. Very old alluvial deposits (Qvoa1) make up the core of the anticlinal hills. Within the hills, The deposits within the hills have been uplifted, deformed, have reddish (old) soils and are typically dense to very dense. The deposits are predominantly silt and clay and show no trace of their original depositional geomorphology.

Overlying very old alluvial deposits at the eastern end of the Northridge Hills are the oldest deposits of the Pacoima/Tujunga fan, as well as a small fan system derived from the Santa Susana Mountains to the north.

## **ENGINEERING GEOLOGY**

The geologic units described above were primarily mapped from their surface expression, especially geomorphology as shown on aerial photos and old topographic maps. The geomorphic mapping was compared with the subsurface properties described in over 900 borehole logs in the study area. Subsurface data used for this study includes the database compiled by John Tinsley for previous liquefaction studies (Tinsley and Fumal, 1985; Tinsley and others, 1985), a database of shear wave velocity measurements originally compiled by Walter Silva (Wills and Silva, 1996), and additional data collected for this study. Subsurface data was collected for this study at Caltrans, the California Department of Water Resources, DMG files of seismic reports for hospital and school sites, the Regional Water Quality Control Board and from Law Crandall, Inc., Leighton and Associates, Inc., and Woodward-Clyde Consultants. In general, the data gathered for geotechnical studies appear to be complete and consistent. Data from environmental geology reports filed with the Water Quality Control Board are well distributed areally and provides reliable data on water levels. Geotechnical data, particularly SPT blow counts, from environmental studies are sometimes less reliable however, due to non-standard equipment and incomplete reporting of procedures. Water well logs from the Department of Water Resources tend to have very sketchy lithologic descriptions and, generally, unreliable reports of shallow, unconfined water levels. Apparently, water-well drillers may note the level of "productive water" ignoring shallower perched water or water in less permeable layers.

Standard Penetration Test (SPT) data provide a standardized measure of the penetration resistance of a geologic deposit and commonly are used as an index of density. Many geotechnical investigations record SPT data, including the number of blows by a 140-pound drop weight required to drive a sampler of specific dimensions one foot into the soil. Recorded blow counts for non-SPT geotechnical sampling, where the sampler diameter, hammer weight or drop distance differ from those specified for an SPT (ASTM

D1586), were converted to SPT-equivalent blow count values and entered into the DMG GIS. The actual and converted SPT blow counts were normalized to a common reference effective overburden pressure of 1 atmosphere (approximately 1 ton per square foot) and a hammer efficiency of 60% using a method described by Seed and Idriss (1982) and Seed and others (1985). This normalized blow count is referred to as  $(N_1)_{60}$ .

Data from previous databases and additional borehole logs were entered into the DMG GIS database. Locations of all exploratory boreholes considered in this investigation are shown on Plate 1.2. Construction of cross sections from the borehole logs, using the GIS, enabled the correlation of soil types from one borehole to another and the outlining of areas of similar soils.

In most cases, the subsurface data allow mapping of different alluvial fans. Different generations of alluvium on the same fan, which are very apparent from the geomorphology, are not distinguishable from the subsurface data.

Descriptions of characteristics of geologic units recorded on the borehole logs are given below. These descriptions are necessarily generalized, but give the most commonly encountered characteristics of the units (see Table 1.2).

### ***Very old alluvium (Qvoa1)***

Very old alluvium, mapped in the Northridge Hills, is represented in the subsurface data by several boreholes in unit Qvoa1. The material in these boreholes is dense to very dense silt, and very stiff to hard clay with minor dense sand.

### ***Older alluvium (Qof2)***

Qof2 is a portion of the large Pacoima/Tujunga fan that has been cut off from its source by uplift. Qof2 consists of loose to moderately dense silt and silty sand with minor clay. Individual layers are not commonly correlatable from well to well. The fine-grained surficial deposit appears to be about twenty feet thick and is underlain by moderately dense to dense sand. Although the older sands are probably late Pleistocene in age, SPT blow counts range from 10 to 20, suggesting that relatively little compaction or cementation has occurred since deposition.

### ***Younger alluvium (Qyf1, Qyf2, Qyt, Qf, Qw)***

Within an alluvial fan, the different generations of younger alluvium can be distinguished by their geomorphic relationships. In the subsurface, it is not possible to distinguish among the generations on an alluvial fan. There may simply be too little difference in age among these units, which probably range from mid-Holocene to historic, for any differences in density or cementation to have formed. In addition, since no geotechnical data were obtained from locally developed, thin, veneer-like, young terrace deposits adjacent to watercourses (Qyt), this unit is not included in Table 1.2.

Younger alluvium of the Pacoima/Tujunga fan (Qw, Qyf1, Qyf2) consists of sand and silty sand with lesser quantities of silt and gravel. In the younger fan deposits and the

modern wash, a braided channel pattern is apparent on pre-development aerial photographs. Braided channels lead to lenticular bedding, which usually cannot be correlated between boreholes. Most sand and silty sand layers are loose to medium dense (N60 of 5 to 15), but very loose sands with SPT blow counts as low as 1 were recorded in some boreholes. The sand becomes denser with depth, with typical N60 values of 15 to 30 below 20 feet.

The most recent fan of Bull Creek (mapped as Qyf1, Qyf2, Qf) is on the south side of the Northridge Hills, which the creek passes through in a water gap. Bull Creek appears to be underfit for this gap, which is probably related to an older branch of the Pacoima/Tujunga fan. The Bull Creek fan also overlies the older Pacoima/Tujunga fan and appears to be at least partly reworked from that material. Although the Bull Creek fan is poorly represented in our subsurface data, the material recorded is silt and silty sand indistinguishable from the underlying Qof2.

The fans of many small streams originating in the Santa Monica Mountains (Qyf1, Qyf2) have merged to form a continuous alluvial apron on the south side of the San Fernando Valley. Generally, these small fans have their apices at the mountain front and extend to the Los Angeles River on the north. Fewer generations of fan deposits are distinguished in these small fans, possibly indicating no major changes in slope or shape of the valley as they were being deposited.

Material in the fans along the Santa Monica Mountain front is variable, with some drainage basins yielding more sand than others. Generally, however, the deposits consist of clay and silt with sand layers. Granular deposits are medium dense, fine- to medium-grained sand and usually silty.

### ***Alluvial basin deposits (Qa)***

Modern flood plain deposits behind Sepulveda Flood Control Dam are mapped as active floodplain or alluvial basin deposits. These deposits are too thin to affect the liquefaction hazard, so were not investigated.

### ***Artificial fill (af)***

Artificial fill on the Van Nuys Quadrangle consists of engineered fill for dams and freeways and waste landfills. The dam and freeway fills are shown on the map of Yerkes and Campbell (1996) and were not modified. The waste landfills occupy old gravel pits on the northeastern part of the quadrangle. The boundaries of these landfills were remapped, based on maps from the Upper Los Angeles River Watermaster (Blevins, 1995). Because the engineered fills are too thin to affect the liquefaction hazard and the waste landfills are in an area of deep ground water, no effort was made to determine their subsurface characteristics.

Geologic Map Unit	Material Type	Consistency	Liquefaction Susceptibility
<b>Qa, alluvial basin</b>	clay, silty clay, some sand	soft/loose	low, locally high
<b>Qw, stream channels</b>	sandy, silty sand	loose-moderately dense	high
<b>Qf, active alluvial fans</b>	silty sand, sand, minor clay	loose-moderately dense	high
<b>Qyf2, younger alluvial fans</b>	silty sand, sand, minor clay	loose-moderately dense	high
<b>Qyf1, young alluvial fan</b>	silty sand, sand, minor clay	loose-moderately dense	high
<b>Qof2, older alluvial fan</b>	silt & silty sand	loose-dense	high
<b>Qof1, older alluvial fan</b>	sand & gravel	Dense	low
<b>Qvoa1, very old alluvium</b>	clay-silty sand	dense-very dense	low

**Table 1.2. General Geotechnical Characteristics and Liquefaction Susceptibility of Younger Quaternary Units.**

## GROUND-WATER CONDITIONS

Liquefaction hazard may exist in areas where depth to ground water is 40 feet or less. DMG uses the highest known ground-water levels because water levels during an earthquake cannot be anticipated because of the unpredictable fluctuations caused by natural processes and human activities. A historical-high ground-water map differs from most ground-water maps, which show the actual water table at a particular time. Plate 1.2 depicts a hypothetical ground-water table within alluviated areas.

Ground-water conditions were investigated in the Van Nuys Quadrangle to evaluate the depth to saturated materials. Saturated conditions reduce the effective normal stress, thereby increasing the likelihood of earthquake-induced liquefaction (Youd, 1973). The evaluation was based on first-encountered water noted in geotechnical borehole logs. The depths to first-encountered unconfined ground water were plotted onto a map of the project area to constrain the estimate of historically shallowest ground water. Water depths from boreholes known to penetrate confined aquifers were not utilized.

The San Fernando Valley ground-water basin is a major source of domestic water for the City of Los Angeles and, as a result, has been extensively studied. The legal rights to water in the ground within the San Fernando Valley were the subject of a lawsuit by the City of Los Angeles against the City of San Fernando and other operators of water wells

in the basin. The "Report of Referee" (California State Water Rights Board, 1962) contains information on the geology, soils and ground-water levels of the San Fernando Valley.

The Report of Referee shows that ground water reached its highest levels in 1944, before excessive pumping caused drawdowns throughout the basin. Management of the ground-water resources led to stabilizing of ground-water elevations in the 1960's and, in some cases, rise of ground-water elevations in the 1970's and 1980's to levels approaching those of 1944. Wells monitored by the Upper Los Angeles River Watermaster (Blevins, 1995) show that in the central San Fernando Valley, including the Van Nuys Quadrangle, water levels have not recovered to the levels of the 1940's.

In order to consider the historically highest ground-water level in liquefaction analysis, the 1944 ground-water elevation contours (State Water Rights Board 1962, Plate 29) were digitized. A three-dimensional model was created from the digitized contours giving a ground-water elevation at any point on a grid. The ground-water elevation values in this grid were then subtracted from the surface elevation values from the USGS Digital Elevation Model (DEM) for the Van Nuys Quadrangle. Subtracting the ground-water elevation grid from the DEM results in a grid of ground-water depth values at any point where the grids overlapped.

The resulting grid of ground-water depth values shows several artifacts of the differences between the sources of ground-water elevation data and surface elevation data. The ground-water elevation contours were interpreted from relatively few measurements in water wells. The USGS DEM is a much more detailed depiction of surface elevation; it also shows man-made features such as excavations and fills that have changed the surface elevations. Most of these surface changes occurred after the ground-water levels were measured in 1944. Ground-water depth contours made from the grid were smoothed and obvious artifacts removed to create the final ground-water depth map (Plate 1.2).

The 1944 ground-water depths on the map were checked against the water levels measured in boreholes compiled for this study. Measured ground-water levels from the 1970's, 1980's and early 1990's tend to be 10 to 20 feet deeper than the 1944 water level, but show the same pattern of shallow ground water near the Los Angeles River and deeper ground water to the north and (to a lesser extent) the south.

Ground water is relatively shallow in all canyons in the Santa Monica Mountains where records were examined. In general, it appears that relatively shallow and impermeable bedrock underlying the canyon alluvium helps to maintain a shallow water table.

## **PART II**

### **LIQUEFACTION POTENTIAL**

Liquefaction may occur in water-saturated sediment during moderate to great earthquakes. Liquefied sediment loses strength and may fail, causing damage to buildings, bridges, and other structures. Many methods for mapping liquefaction hazard have been proposed. Youd (1991) highlights the principal developments and notes some of the widely used criteria. Youd and Perkins (1978) demonstrate the use of geologic criteria as a qualitative characterization of liquefaction susceptibility and introduce the mapping technique of combining a liquefaction susceptibility map and a liquefaction opportunity map to produce a liquefaction potential map. Liquefaction susceptibility is a function of the capacity of sediment to resist liquefaction. Liquefaction opportunity is a function of the potential seismic ground shaking intensity.

The method applied in this study for evaluating liquefaction potential is similar to that of Tinsley and others (1985). Tinsley and others (1985) applied a combination of the techniques used by Seed and others (1983) and Youd and Perkins (1978) for their mapping of liquefaction hazards in the Los Angeles region. This method combines geotechnical analyses, geologic and hydrologic mapping, and probabilistic earthquake shaking estimates, but follows criteria adopted by the State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 2000).

### **LIQUEFACTION SUSCEPTIBILITY**

Liquefaction susceptibility reflects the relative resistance of a soil to loss of strength when subjected to ground shaking. Physical properties of soil such as sediment grain-size distribution, compaction, cementation, saturation, and depth govern the degree of resistance to liquefaction. Some of these properties can be correlated to a sediment's geologic age and environment of deposition. With increasing age, relative density may increase through cementation of the particles or compaction caused by the weight of the overlying sediment. Grain-size characteristics of a soil also influence susceptibility to liquefaction. Sand is more susceptible than silt or gravel, although silt of low plasticity is treated as liquefiable in this investigation. Cohesive soils generally are not considered susceptible to liquefaction. Such soils may be vulnerable to strength loss with remolding and represent a hazard that is not addressed in this investigation. Soil characteristics and processes that result in higher measured penetration resistances generally indicate lower liquefaction susceptibility. Thus, blow count and cone penetrometer values are useful indicators of liquefaction susceptibility.

Saturation is required for liquefaction, and the liquefaction susceptibility of a soil varies with the depth to ground water. Very shallow ground water increases the susceptibility to liquefaction (soil is more likely to liquefy). Soils that lack resistance (susceptible soils) typically are saturated, loose and sandy. Soils resistant to liquefaction include all soil types that are dry, cohesive, or sufficiently dense.



DMG's map inventory of areas containing soils susceptible to liquefaction begins with evaluation of geologic maps and historical occurrences, cross-sections, geotechnical test data, geomorphology, and ground-water hydrology. Soil properties and soil conditions such as type, age, texture, color, and consistency, along with historical depths to ground water are used to identify, characterize, and correlate susceptible soils. Because Quaternary geologic mapping is based on similar soil observations, liquefaction susceptibility maps typically are similar to Quaternary geologic maps. DMG's qualitative susceptible soil inventory is outlined below and summarized on Table 1.2.

### ***Very old alluvium (Qvoa)***

Very old alluvium consists of dense to very dense silt and clay deposits in an area of deep ground water. Liquefaction susceptibility of this unit is low.

### ***Old alluvium (Qof2)***

Old alluvium on the Van Nuys Quadrangle consists of loose to moderately dense silt and silty sand of unit Qof2. In the southern part of area underlain by this unit, ground water is shallower than 40 feet. Those portions with shallow ground water have high liquefaction susceptibility.

### ***Young alluvium (Qyf1, Qyf2, Qyt, Qf, Qw)***

Younger alluvium on the Van Nuys Quadrangle consists of sand with silty sand, silt and gravel. Most boreholes in these units contain loose to moderately dense sand; some contain very loose sand. Where ground water is within 40 feet of the surface liquefaction susceptibility of these units is high.

### ***Artificial fill (af)***

Artificial fill on the Van Nuys Quadrangle consists of engineered fill for dams and freeways and waste landfills. The engineered fill is generally too thin to affect liquefaction susceptibility. The waste landfills are located in the northeastern part of the quadrangle, in an area of deep ground water. They have low liquefaction susceptibility due to the deep ground water.

## **LIQUEFACTION OPPORTUNITY**

Liquefaction opportunity is a measure, expressed in probabilistic terms, of the potential for strong ground shaking. Analyses of in-situ liquefaction resistance require assessment of liquefaction opportunity. The minimum level of seismic excitation to be used for such purposes is the level of peak ground acceleration (PGA) with a 10% probability of exceedance over a 50-year period (DOC, 2000). The earthquake magnitude used in DMG's analysis is the magnitude that contributes most to the calculated PGA for an area.

For the Van Nuys Quadrangle, a peak acceleration of 0.60g resulting from an earthquake of magnitude 6.5 was used for liquefaction analyses. The PGA and magnitude values

were based on de-aggregation of the probabilistic hazard at the 10% in 50-year hazard level (Petersen and others, 1996; Cramer and Petersen, 1996). See the ground motion section (3) of this report for further details.

### **Quantitative Liquefaction Analysis**

DMG performs quantitative analysis of geotechnical data to evaluate liquefaction potential using the Seed Simplified Procedure (Seed and Idriss, 1971; Seed and others, 1983; Seed and others, 1985; National Research Council, 1985; Seed and Harder, 1990; Youd and Idriss, 1997). This procedure calculates soil resistance to liquefaction, expressed in terms of cyclic resistance ratio (CRR) based on standard penetration test (SPT) results, ground-water level, soil density, moisture content, soil type, and sample depth. CRR values are then compared to calculated earthquake-generated shear stresses expressed in terms of cyclic stress ratio (CSR). The factor of safety (FS) relative to liquefaction is:  $FS = CRR/CSR$ . FS, therefore, is a quantitative measure of liquefaction potential. DMG uses a factor of safety of 1.0 or less, where CSR equals or exceeds CRR, to indicate the presence of potentially liquefiable soil. While an FS of 1.0 is considered the “trigger” for liquefaction, for a site specific analysis an FS of as much as 1.5 may be appropriate depending on the vulnerability of the site related structures. For a regional assessment DMG normally has a range of FS that results from the liquefaction analyses. The DMG liquefaction analysis program calculates an FS at each sample that has blow counts. The lowest FS in each borehole is used for that location. These FS vary in reliability according to the quality of the geotechnical data. These FS as well as other considerations such as slope, free face conditions, and thickness and depth of potentially liquefiable soil are evaluated in order to construct liquefaction potential maps, which then directly translate to Zones of Required Investigation.

Of the nearly 950 geotechnical borehole logs reviewed in this study (Plate 1.2), fewer than 100 include blow-count data from SPT's or from penetration tests that allow reasonable blow count translations to SPT-equivalent values. Non-SPT values, such as those resulting from the use of 2-inch or 2 1/2-inch inside diameter ring samplers, were translated to SPT-equivalent values if reasonable factors could be used in conversion calculations. The reliability of the SPT-equivalent values varies. Therefore, they are weighted and used in a more qualitative manner. Few borehole logs, however, include all of the information (soil density, moisture content, sieve analysis, etc) required for an ideal Seed Simplified Analysis. For boreholes having acceptable penetration tests, liquefaction analysis is performed using logged density, moisture, and sieve test values or using average test values of similar materials.

## **LIQUEFACTION ZONES**

### **Criteria for Zoning**

Areas underlain by materials susceptible to liquefaction during an earthquake were included in liquefaction zones using criteria developed by the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act Advisory Committee and adopted by the California State Mining and Geology Board

(DOC, 2000). Under those guideline criteria, liquefaction zones are areas meeting one or more of the following:

1. Areas known to have experienced liquefaction during historical earthquakes
2. All areas of uncompacted artificial fill containing liquefaction-susceptible material that are saturated, nearly saturated, or may be expected to become saturated
3. Areas where sufficient existing geotechnical data and analyses indicate that the soils are potentially liquefiable
4. Areas where existing geotechnical data are insufficient

In areas of limited or no geotechnical data, susceptibility zones may be identified by geologic criteria as follows:

- a) Areas containing soil deposits of late Holocene age (current river channels and their historic floodplains, marshes and estuaries), where the M7.5-weighted peak acceleration that has a 10% probability of being exceeded in 50 years is greater than or equal to 0.10 g and the water table is less than 40 feet below the ground surface; or
- b) Areas containing soil deposits of Holocene age (less than 11,000 years), where the M7.5-weighted peak acceleration that has a 10% probability of being exceeded in 50 years is greater than or equal to 0.20 g and the historical high water table is less than or equal to 30 feet below the ground surface; or
- c) Areas containing soil deposits of latest Pleistocene age (11,000 to 15,000 years), where the M7.5-weighted peak acceleration that has a 10% probability of being exceeded in 50 years is greater than or equal to 0.30 g and the historical high water table is less than or equal to 20 feet below the ground surface.

Application of SMGB criteria to liquefaction zoning in the Van Nuys Quadrangle is summarized below.

### **Areas of Past Liquefaction**

Earthquake shaking was very intense in the Van Nuys Quadrangle during the 1994 Northridge earthquake. As a result, structural damage was widespread, especially in the Sherman Oaks area. The only reported surface manifestation of liquefaction is from Marshall Lew, a geotechnical engineer with the geotechnical firm of Law/Crandall, Inc. In Studio City, along the 12500 block of Ventura Boulevard, about 200 feet west of Coldwater Canyon Avenue, the ground beneath a one-story bank building (now razed) exhibited numerous cracks, some of which exhibited differential movement, that Lew attributed to lateral spreading. This locality is just south of the Los Angeles River channel and the near-surface materials at the site may consist of fill. The concrete walls of the nearby river channel did not show any cracking or distortion after the earthquake.

### **Artificial Fills**

In the Van Nuys Quadrangle, two kinds of artificial fill are large enough to show at the scale of mapping, engineered fill for dams and freeways, and waste landfills. The engineered fills for dams and freeways are generally too thin to have an impact on liquefaction hazard and so were not investigated. Areas of waste landfill were remapped based on the report of the Upper Los Angeles River Watermaster (Blevins, 1995) but no attempt was made to determine their engineering properties because all are in areas of deep ground water.

### **Areas with Sufficient Existing Geotechnical Data**

The dense consistency of the very old alluvium exposed in the Northridge Hills (Qvoa1) and deep ground water encountered in boreholes that penetrate it indicates a low susceptibility to liquefaction. Accordingly, this geologic unit has not been included in a liquefaction zone in this area.

Older alluvial fan deposits (Qof2) in the western part of the Van Nuys Quadrangle are generally silt and silty sand of loose to moderately dense consistency. These material properties lead to moderate to high liquefaction susceptibilities for the projected earthquake shaking. Although not all of the unit has high susceptibility, it is not possible to map units of moderate and high susceptibility separately. The ground-water table becomes deeper toward the north. The northern portions of this unit do not have ground water within 40 feet of the surface. All younger alluvium, where ground water has been identified less than 40 feet from the surface, is included within a liquefaction zone.

Younger alluvial deposits (Qyf1, Qyf2, Qyt, Qw) of the main Pacoima/Tujunga fan have generally high liquefaction susceptibility. Ground water becomes deeper to the north, however, so the northern portions of these units have not had recorded ground water within 40 feet of the surface. All younger alluvium where ground water has been less than 40 feet from the surface are included in a liquefaction zone.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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## **SECTION 2**

# **EARTHQUAKE-INDUCED LANDSLIDE EVALUATION REPORT**

## **Earthquake-Induced Landslide Zones in the Van Nuys 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California**

**By**

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### **PURPOSE**

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (the Act) of 1990 (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.8, Division 2) directs the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) to delineate Seismic Hazard Zones. The purpose of the Act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps prepared by DMG in their land-use planning and permitting processes. The Act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations be performed prior to permitting most urban development projects within the hazard zones. Evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazards are to be conducted under guidelines established by the California State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 1997; also available on the Internet at <http://gmw.consrv.ca.gov/shmp/webdocs/sp117.pdf>).

This section of the evaluation report summarizes seismic hazard zone mapping for earthquake-induced landslides in the Van Nuys 7.5-minute Quadrangle. This section, along with Section 1 (addressing liquefaction), and Section 3 (addressing earthquake



shaking), form a report that is one of a series that summarizes the preparation of seismic hazard zone maps within the state (Smith, 1996). Additional information on seismic hazard zone mapping in California can be accessed on DMG's Internet web page:

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS/index.htm>

## **BACKGROUND**

Landslides triggered by earthquakes historically have been a significant cause of earthquake damage. In California, large earthquakes such as the 1971 San Fernando, 1989 Loma Prieta, and 1994 Northridge earthquakes triggered landslides that were responsible for destroying or damaging numerous structures, blocking major transportation corridors, and damaging life-line infrastructure. Areas that are most susceptible to earthquake-induced landslides are steep slopes in poorly cemented or highly fractured rocks, areas underlain by loose, weak soils, and areas on or adjacent to existing landslide deposits. These geologic and terrain conditions exist in many parts of California, including numerous hillside areas that have already been developed or are likely to be developed in the future. The opportunity for strong earthquake ground shaking is high in many parts of California because of the presence of numerous active faults. The combination of these factors constitutes a significant seismic hazard throughout much of California, including the hillside areas of the Van Nuys Quadrangle.

## **METHODS SUMMARY**

The mapping of earthquake-induced landslide hazard zones presented in this report is based on the best available terrain, geologic, geotechnical, and seismological data. If unavailable or significantly outdated, new forms of these data were compiled or generated specifically for this project. The following were collected or generated for this evaluation:

- Digital terrain data were used to provide an up-to-date representation of slope gradient and slope aspect in the study area
- Geologic mapping was used to provide an accurate representation of the spatial distribution of geologic materials in the study area. In addition, a map of existing landslides, whether triggered by earthquakes or not, was prepared
- Geotechnical laboratory test data were collected and statistically analyzed to quantitatively characterize the strength properties and dynamic slope stability of geologic materials in the study area
- Seismological data in the form of DMG probabilistic shaking maps and catalogs of strong-motion records were used to characterize future earthquake shaking within the mapped area

The data collected for this evaluation were processed into a series of GIS layers using commercially available software. A slope stability analysis was performed using the

Newmark method of analysis (Newmark, 1965), resulting in a map of landslide hazard potential. The earthquake-induced landslide hazard zone was derived from the landslide hazard potential map according to criteria developed in a DMG pilot study (McCrink and Real, 1996) and adopted by the State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 2000).

## **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The methodology used to make this map is based on earthquake ground-shaking estimates, geologic material-strength characteristics and slope gradient. These data are gathered from a variety of outside sources. Although the selection of data used in this evaluation was rigorous, the quality of the data is variable. The State of California and the Department of Conservation make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy of the data gathered from outside sources.

Earthquake-induced landslide zone maps are intended to prompt more detailed, site-specific geotechnical investigations as required by the Act. As such, these zone maps identify areas where the potential for earthquake-induced landslides is relatively high. Due to limitations in methodology, it should be noted that these zone maps do not necessarily capture all potential earthquake-induced landslide hazards. Earthquake-induced ground failures that are not addressed by this map include those associated with ridge-top spreading and shattered ridges. It should also be noted that no attempt has been made to map potential run-out areas of triggered landslides. It is possible that such run-out areas may extend beyond the zone boundaries. The potential for ground failure resulting from liquefaction-induced lateral spreading of alluvial materials, considered by some to be a form of landsliding, is not specifically addressed by the earthquake-induced landslide zone or this report. See Section 1, Liquefaction Evaluation Report for the Van Nuys Quadrangle, for more information on the delineation of liquefaction zones.

The remainder of this report describes in more detail the mapping data and processes used to prepare the earthquake-induced landslide zone map for the Van Nuys Quadrangle. The information is presented in two parts. Part I covers physiographic, geologic and engineering geologic conditions in the study area. Part II covers the preparation of landslide hazard potential and landslide zone maps.

## **PART I**

### **PHYSIOGRAPHY**

#### **Study Area Location and Physiography**

The Van Nuys Quadrangle covers approximately 62 square miles of Los Angeles County within the central and eastern San Fernando Valley, about 14 miles northwest of the Los

Angeles Civic Center. The map includes portions of the City of Los Angeles communities of Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Studio City, and North Hollywood. The northern three quarters of the quadrangle is characterized by gently sloping to flat-lying terrain of the San Fernando Valley, whereas the southern quarter is dominated by the hilly terrain of the northern slope of the eastern Santa Monica Mountains. The eastern crest of the west-trending Santa Monica Mountain range lies near the southern border of the quadrangle. Within the map area, several north-trending canyons extend from the range crest to the valley floor. Access to the hilly and mountainous terrain is provided by numerous narrow residential streets and broader boulevards that follow north-trending canyons and ridgecrests between Ventura Boulevard on the north and Mulholland Drive, which follows the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains, on the south.

Residential and commercial development is concentrated in the flat-lying valley area. Hillside residential development began after World War II and continues with several mass-grading projects today. Other land uses include Sepulveda Dam Flood Control and Recreational Area located in the west central part of the quadrangle, and gravel pit operations located in the Tujunga Wash in the northeastern corner of the map.

### **Digital Terrain Data**

The calculation of slope gradient is an essential part of the evaluation of slope stability under earthquake conditions. An accurate slope gradient calculation begins with an up-to-date map representation of the earth's surface. Within the Van Nuys Quadrangle, a Level 2 digital elevation model (DEM) was obtained from the USGS (U.S. Geological Survey, 1993). This DEM, which was prepared from the 7.5-minute quadrangle topographic contours that are based on 1947 aerial photography, has a 10-meter horizontal resolution and a 7.5-meter vertical accuracy.

To update the terrain data, areas that have recently undergone large-scale grading as a part of residential development in the hilly portions of the Van Nuys Quadrangle, essentially the Santa Monica Mountains, were identified. Terrain data for these areas were obtained from an airborne interferometric radar (TOPSAR) DEM flown and processed in August 1994 by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), and reprocessed by Calgis, Inc. (GeoSAR Consortium, 1995 and 1996). These terrain data were also smoothed prior to analysis. Plate 2.1 shows the area where topography is updated.

A slope map was made from the DEM using a third-order, finite difference, center-weighted algorithm (Horn, 1981). The DEM was also used to make a slope aspect map. The manner in which the slope and aspect maps were used to prepare the zone map will be described in subsequent sections of this report.

## **GEOLOGY**

### **Bedrock and Surficial Geology**

A recently compiled U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) geologic map was obtained in digital form (Yerkes and Campbell, 1996) for the Van Nuys Quadrangle. In the field,

observations were made of exposures, aspects of weathering, and general surface expression of the geologic units. In addition, the relation of the various geologic units to development and abundance of landslides was noted.

The oldest geologic unit mapped in the Van Nuys Quadrangle is the Jurassic Santa Monica Slate (Yerkes and Campbell map symbols Jsm and Jsms), which is exposed in a small area in the southwest corner of the quadrangle. Locally, it consists of intensely jointed and fractured slate and phyllite with well-developed slaty cleavage and a thick weathered zone characterized by angular chips and thin slabs of slate surrounded by clay. The spotted slate (Jsms) contains abundant crystals of cordierite believed to have formed as a result of contact metamorphism of the Santa Monica Slate by granitic intrusions.

In the map area, Santa Monica Slate is overlain unconformably by shallow-marine clastic sedimentary rocks and volcanics of the middle Miocene Topanga Group and deep-marine biogenic and clastic rocks of the upper Miocene Modelo Formation. The Topanga Group consists of interbedded conglomerate, massive sandstone, concretionary shale and siltstone, and basalt flows (Tt, Ttc, Ttp, and Tb). The Modelo Formation is the most widely exposed bedrock unit in the quadrangle and is composed of interbedded clay shale, siltstone, and sandstone (Tm), diatomaceous shale and siltstone (Tmd), and massive, fine- to coarse-grained sandstone (Tms). Bedding in the Modelo Formation typically dips in the same direction as the slopes in the area (northward), creating slope-stability problems.

Quaternary deposits cover the floor and margins of the San Fernando Valley and extend southward up into the canyons in the Santa Monica Mountains. They generally consist of older and younger alluvial-fan and basin deposits of upper Pleistocene and Holocene age (Qa, Qf, Qof1, Qof2, Qvoa1, Qw, Qyf1, Qyf2, and Qyt). Landslides (Qls and Qls?) are widespread in the Van Nuys Quadrangle, occurring primarily on dipslopes in the Modelo Formation. Modern man-made (artificial) fills (af) are also mapped in some areas. A more detailed discussion of the Quaternary deposits in the Van Nuys Quadrangle can be found in Section 1.

### **Landslide Inventory**

As a part of the geologic data compilation, an inventory of existing landslides in the Van Nuys Quadrangle was prepared (Irvine, unpublished) by using previous work done in the area (Tan, 1995a and 1995b) and by combining field observations, analysis of aerial photos, and interpretation of landforms on current and older topographic maps. The following aerial photos were used for landslide interpretation: Fairchild (1927), Fairchild (1928), NASA (1994a and 1994b), and USDA (1952/53) (see Air Photos in References). Also consulted during the mapping process were previous maps and reports that contain geologic and landslide data (Byer, 1987; Dibblee, 1991; Harp and Jibson, 1995; Hollingsworth and Buckley, 1987; Hoots, 1930; Los Angeles Dept. of Public Works, 1963; Parmelee, 1987; and Weber and others, 1979). Landslides were mapped and digitized at a scale of 1:24,000. For each landslide included on the map a number of characteristics (attributes) were compiled. These characteristics include the confidence of interpretation (definite, probable and questionable) and other properties, such as

activity, thickness, and associated geologic unit(s). Landslides rated as definite and probable were carried into the slope stability analysis. Landslides rated as questionable were not carried into the slope stability analysis due to the uncertainty of their existence. The completed hand-drawn landslide map was scanned, digitized, and the attributes were compiled in a database. A version of this landslide inventory is included with Plate 2.1.

## **ENGINEERING GEOLOGY**

### **Geologic Material Strength**

To evaluate the stability of geologic materials under earthquake conditions, the geologic map units described above were ranked and grouped on the basis of their shear strength. Generally, the primary source for rock shear-strength measurements is geotechnical reports prepared by consultants on file with local government permitting departments. Shear-strength data for the rock units identified on the Van Nuys Quadrangle geologic map were obtained from the City of Los Angeles (see Appendix A). The locations of rock and soil samples taken for shear testing by consultants are shown on Plate 2.1. When available, shear tests from adjacent quadrangles were used to augment data for geologic formations that had little or no shear test information.

Shear strength data gathered from the above sources were compiled for each geologic map unit. Geologic units were grouped on the basis of average angle of internal friction (average  $\phi$ ) and lithologic character. Average (mean and median)  $\phi$  values for each geologic map unit and corresponding strength group are summarized in Table 2.1. For most of the geologic strength groups in the map area, a single shear strength value was assigned and used in our slope stability analysis. A geologic material strength map was made based on the groupings presented in Tables 2.1 and 2.2, and this map provides a spatial representation of material strength for use in the slope stability analysis.

### **Adverse Bedding Conditions**

Adverse bedding conditions are an important consideration in slope stability analyses. Adverse bedding conditions occur where the dip direction of bedded sedimentary rocks is roughly the same as the slope aspect, and where the dip magnitude is less than the slope gradient. Under these conditions, landslides can slip along bedding surfaces due to a lack of lateral support.

To account for adverse bedding in our slope stability evaluation, we used geologic structural data in combination with digital terrain data to identify areas with potentially adverse bedding, using methods similar to those of Brabb (1983). The structural data, derived from the geologic map database, was used to categorize areas of common bedding dip direction and magnitude. The dip direction was then compared to the slope aspect and, if the same, the dip magnitude and slope gradient categories were compared. If the dip magnitude was less than or equal to the slope gradient category but greater than 25% (4:1 slope), the area was marked as a potential adverse bedding area.

The formations, which contain interbedded sandstone and shale, were subdivided based on shear strength differences between coarse-grained (higher strength) and fine-grained (lower strength) lithologies. Shear strength values for the fine- and coarse-grained lithologies were then applied to areas of favorable and adverse bedding orientation, which were determined from structural and terrain data as discussed above. It was assumed that coarse-grained material (higher strength) dominates where bedding dips into a slope (favorable bedding) while fine-grained (lower strength) material dominates where bedding dips out of a slope (adverse bedding). The geologic material strength map was modified by assigning the lower, fine-grained shear strength values to areas where potential adverse bedding conditions were identified. The favorable and adverse bedding shear strength parameters for the formations are included in Table 2.1.

### **Existing Landslides**

The strength characteristics of existing landslides (QIs) must be based on tests of the materials along the landslide slip surface. Ideally, shear tests of slip surfaces formed in each mapped geologic unit would be used. However, this amount of information is rarely available, and for the preparation of the earthquake-induced landslide zone map it has been assumed that all landslides within the quadrangle have the same slip surface strength parameters. We collect and use primarily “residual” strength parameters from laboratory tests of slip surface materials tested in direct shear or ring shear test equipment. Back-calculated strength parameters, if the calculations appear to have been performed appropriately, have also been used.

VAN NUYS QUADRANGLE SHEAR STRENGTH GROUPINGS							
	Formation Name	Number Tests	Mean/Median Phi	Mean/Median (Group phi) (deg)	Group Mean/Median C (psf)	No Data: Similar Geologic Strength	Phi Values Used in Stability Analysis
GROUP 1	Tm(fbc)	10	34.6 / 35	33.9 / 34	559 / 450	Tb, Jsm Jsms	34
	Tms	22	33.5 / 33.3				
GROUP 2	Tmd	49	29.0 / 30	28.7 / 29	548 / 405	af, Ttc Qa, Qao, Qf Qoa1, Qof1 Qof2, Qvoa1 Qvoa2, Qw Qyf1, Qyf2 Qyt	29
	Qay1, Qay2	13	26.7 / 27				
	Tm (abc)	29	28.5 / 28.5				
	Tt	14	28.9 / 28.5				
	Ttp	18	29.6 / 29.5				
GROUP 3	Qls	-	-	-	-	-	15
abc = adverse bedding condition, fine-grained material strength fbc = favorable bedding condition, coarse-grained material strength							

**Table 2.1. Summary of the Shear Strength Statistics for the Van Nuys Quadrangle.**

SHEAR STRENGTH GROUPS FOR THE VAN NUYS QUADRANGLE		
GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
Tb	af	Qls
Tm (fbc)	Qa	
Tms	Qao	
Jsm	Qay1	
Jsms	Qay2	
	Qf	
	Qoa1	
	Qof1	
	Qof2	
	Qvoa1	
	Qvoa2	
	Qw	
	Qyf1	
	Qyf2	
	Qyt	
	Tmd	
	Ttc	

**Table 2.2. Summary of the Shear Strength Groups for the Van Nuys Quadrangle.**

## PART II

### EARTHQUAKE-INDUCED LANDSLIDE HAZARD POTENTIAL

#### Design Strong-Motion Record

To evaluate earthquake-induced landslide hazard potential in the study area, a method of dynamic slope stability analysis developed by Newmark (1965) was used. The Newmark method analyzes dynamic slope stability by calculating the cumulative down-slope displacement for a given earthquake strong-motion time history. As implemented for the preparation of earthquake-induced landslide zones, the Newmark method necessitates the selection of a design earthquake strong-motion record to provide the “ground shaking opportunity.” For the Van Nuys Quadrangle, selection of a strong motion record was based on an estimation of probabilistic ground motion parameters for modal magnitude, modal distance, and peak ground acceleration (PGA). The parameters were estimated from maps prepared by DMG for a 10% probability of being exceeded in 50 years (Petersen and others, 1996). The parameters used in the record selection are:



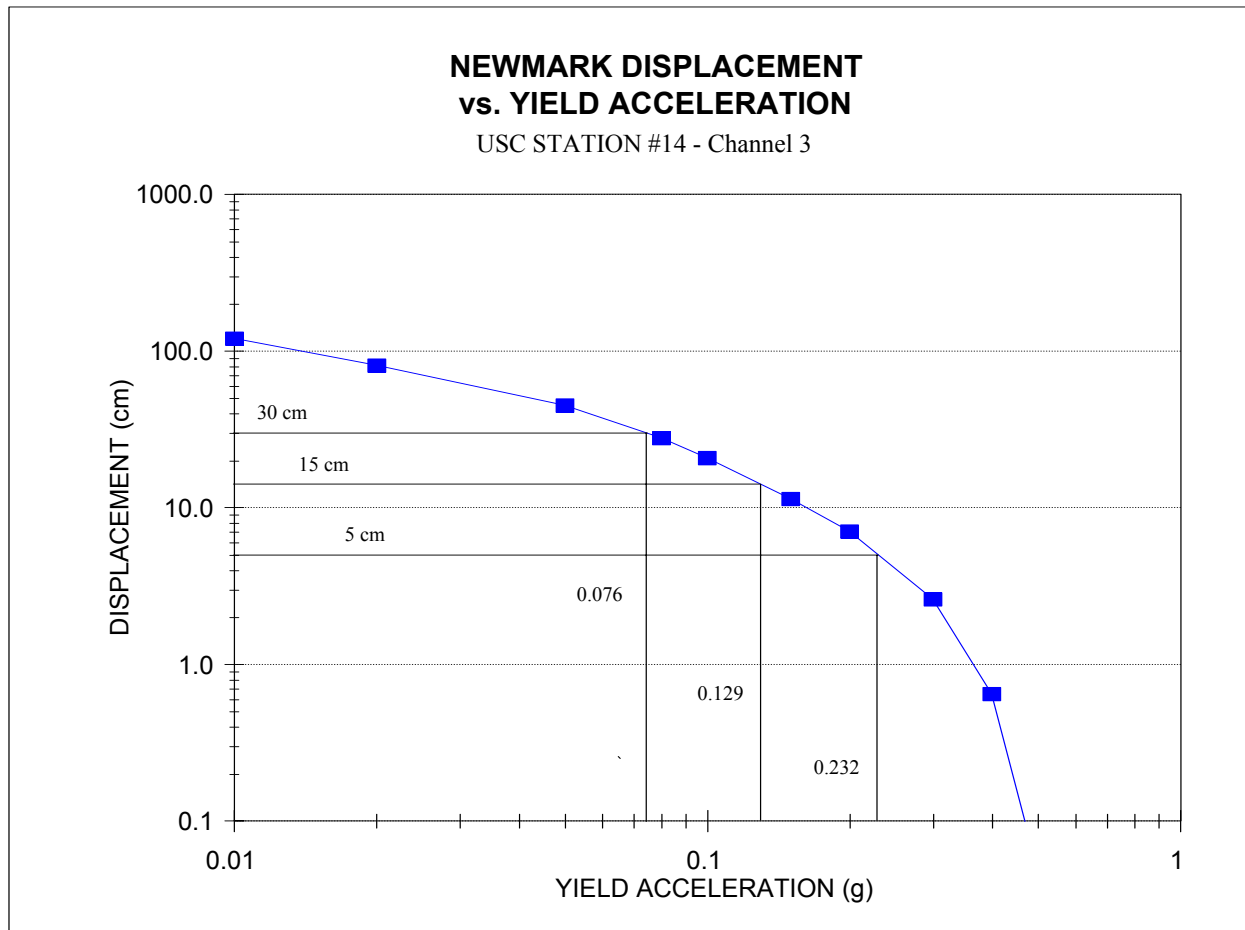
Modal Magnitude:	6.5 to 6.75
Modal Distance:	4 to 12 km
PGA:	0.48 to 0.78 g

The strong-motion record selected for the slope stability analysis in the Van Nuys Quadrangle was the Channel 3 (north horizontal component) University of Southern California Station #14 recording from the magnitude 6.7 Northridge earthquake (Trifunac and others, 1994). This record had a source to recording site distance of 8.5 km and a peak ground acceleration (PGA) of 0.69 g. The selected strong-motion record was not scaled or otherwise modified prior to its use in the analysis.

### **Displacement Calculation**

The design strong-motion record was used to develop a relationship between landslide displacement and yield acceleration ( $a_y$ ), defined as the earthquake horizontal ground acceleration above which landslide displacements take place. This relationship was prepared by integrating the design strong-motion record twice for a given acceleration value to find the corresponding displacement, and the process was repeated for a range of acceleration values (Jibson, 1993). The resulting curve in Figure 2.1 represents the full spectrum of displacements that can be expected for the design strong-motion record. This curve provides the required link between anticipated earthquake shaking and estimates of displacement for different combinations of geologic materials and slope gradient, as described in the Slope Stability Analysis section below.

The amount of displacement predicted by the Newmark analysis provides an indication of the relative amount of damage that could be caused by earthquake-induced landsliding. Displacements of 30, 15 and 5 cm were used as criteria for rating levels of earthquake-induced landslide hazard potential based on the work of Youd (1980), Wilson and Keefer (1983), and a DMG pilot study for earthquake-induced landslides (McCrink and Real, 1996). Applied to the curve in Figure 2.1, these displacements correspond to yield accelerations of 0.074, 0.13 and 0.21g. Because these yield acceleration values are derived from the design strong-motion record, they represent the ground shaking opportunity thresholds that are significant in the Van Nuys Quadrangle.



**Figure 2.1. Yield Acceleration vs. Newmark Displacement for the USC Station # 14 Strong-Motion Record From the 17 January 1994 Northridge, California Earthquake.**

### Slope Stability Analysis

A slope stability analysis was performed for each geologic material strength group at slope increments of 1 degree. An infinite-slope failure model under unsaturated slope conditions was assumed. A factor of safety was calculated first, followed by the calculation of yield acceleration from Newmark's equation:

$$a_y = (FS - 1)g \sin \alpha$$

where FS is the Factor of Safety,  $g$  is the acceleration due to gravity, and  $\alpha$  is the direction of movement of the slide mass, in degrees measured from the horizontal, when displacement is initiated (Newmark, 1965). For an infinite slope failure  $\alpha$  is the same as the slope angle.

The yield accelerations resulting from Newmark's equations represent the susceptibility to earthquake-induced failure of each geologic material strength group for a range of

slope gradients. Based on the relationship between yield acceleration and Newmark displacement shown in Figure 2.1, hazard potentials were assigned as follows:

1. If the calculated yield acceleration was less than 0.074g, Newmark displacement greater than 30 cm is indicated, and a HIGH hazard potential was assigned (H on Table 2.3)
2. If the calculated yield acceleration fell between 0.074g and 0.13g, Newmark displacement between 15 cm and 30 cm is indicated, and a MODERATE hazard potential was assigned (M on Table 2.3)
3. If the calculated yield acceleration fell between 0.13g and 0.21g, Newmark displacement between 5 cm and 15 cm is indicated, and a LOW hazard potential was assigned (L on Table 2.3)
4. If the calculated yield acceleration was greater than 0.21g, Newmark displacement of less than 5 cm is indicated, and a VERY LOW potential was assigned (VL on Table 2.3)

Table 2.3 summarizes the results of the stability analyses. The earthquake-induced landslide hazard potential map was prepared by combining the geologic material-strength map and the slope map according to this table.

VAN NUYS QUADRANGLE HAZARD POTENTIAL MATRIX										
SLOPE CATEGORY (% SLOPE)										
Geologic Material Group	MEAN PHI	I 0-12	II 12-19	III 19-32	IV 32-42	V 42-49	VI 49-53	VII 53-60	VIII >60	percent
1	34	VL	VL	VL	VL	L	L	M	M	
2	29	VL	VL	VL	L	M	H	H	H	
3	15	L	M	H	H	H	H	H	H	

**Table 2.3. Hazard Potential Matrix for Earthquake-Induced Landslides in the Van Nuys Quadrangle.** Shaded area indicates hazard potential levels included within the hazard zone. H = High, M = Moderate, L = Low, VL = Very Low.

## **EARTHQUAKE-INDUCED LANDSLIDE HAZARD ZONE**

### **Criteria for Zoning**

Earthquake-induced landslide zones were delineated using criteria adopted by the California State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 2000). Under these criteria, earthquake-induced landslide hazard zones are defined as areas that meet one or both of the following conditions:

1. Areas that have been identified as having experienced landslide movement in the past, including all mappable landslide deposits and source areas as well as any landslide that is known to have been triggered by historic earthquake activity.
2. Areas where the geologic and geotechnical data and analyses indicate that the earth materials may be susceptible to earthquake-induced slope failure.

These conditions are discussed in further detail in the following sections.

### **Existing Landslides**

Existing landslides typically consist of disrupted soils and rock materials that are generally weaker than adjacent undisturbed rock and soil materials. Previous studies indicate that existing landslides can be reactivated by earthquake movements (Keefer, 1984). Earthquake-triggered movement of existing landslides is most pronounced in steep head scarp areas and at the toe of existing landslide deposits. Although reactivation of deep-seated landslide deposits is less common (Keefer, 1984), a significant number of deep-seated landslide movements have occurred during, or soon after, several recent earthquakes. Based on these observations, all existing landslides with a definite or probable confidence rating are included within the earthquake-induced landslide hazard zone.

No earthquake-triggered landslides had been identified in the Van Nuys Quadrangle prior to the Northridge earthquake. The Northridge earthquake caused a number of relatively small, shallow slope failures in the Van Nuys Quadrangle (Harp and Jibson, 1995). Landslides attributed to the Northridge earthquake covered approximately 23 acres of land in the quadrangle, which is less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the total area covered by the map. Of the area covered by these Northridge earthquake landslides, 70% falls within the area of the hazard zone based on a computer comparison of the zone map and the Harp and Jibson (1995) inventory.

### **Geologic and Geotechnical Analysis**

Based on the conclusions of a pilot study performed by DMG (McCrink and Real, 1996), it has been concluded that earthquake-induced landslide hazard zones should encompass all areas that have a High, Moderate or Low level of hazard potential (see Table 2.3). This would include all areas where the analyses indicate earthquake displacements of 5

centimeters or greater. Areas with a Very Low hazard potential, indicating less than 5 centimeters displacement, are excluded from the zone.

As summarized in Table 2.3, all areas characterized by the following geologic strength group and slope gradient conditions are included in the earthquake-induced landslide hazard zone:

1. Geologic Strength Group 3 is included for all slope gradient categories. (Note: Geologic Strength Group 3 includes all mappable landslides with a definite or probable confidence rating).
2. Geologic Strength Group 2 is included for all slopes steeper than 32 percent.
3. Geologic Strength Group 1 is included for all slopes steeper than 42 percent.

This results in approximately 5 percent of the quadrangle lying within the earthquake-induced landslide hazard zone for the Van Nuys Quadrangle. However, since most of the quadrangle consists of the San Fernando Valley floor the landslide zone is actually about 40 percent of the hillside terrain in the southern part of the quadrangle.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their assistance in obtaining the data necessary to complete this project. Geologic material strength data were collected at the City of Los Angeles with the assistance of Joseph Cobarrubias and Nicki Girmay. Additional shear test data for the Santa Monica Slate were provided by Joseph Cota of GeoSoils, Inc. Robert Hancock and Tony Brown (City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering) provided helpful observations of earthquake-related slope failures in the Santa Monica Mountains. Randy Jibson of the U.S. Geological Survey provided digital terrain data. Technical review of the methodology was provided by Bruce Clark, Randy Jibson, Robert Larson, Scott Lindvall, and J. David Rogers, who are members of the State Mining and Geology Board's Seismic Hazards Mapping Act Advisory Committee Landslides Working Group. At DMG, special thanks to Bob Moskovitz, Teri McGuire, Scott Shepherd and Oris Miller for their GIS operations support, and to Joy Arthur for designing and plotting the graphic displays associated with the hazard zone map and this report. Assistance in the application of the radar DEM was provided by Rick Wilson and Tim McCrink.

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**APPENDIX A  
SOURCE OF ROCK STRENGTH DATA**

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF TESTS SELECTED</b>
<b>City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works Material Engineering Division files.</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Total Number of Shear Tests</b>	<b>155</b>

## **SECTION 3**

# **GROUND SHAKING EVALUATION REPORT**

### **Potential Ground Shaking in the Van Nuys 7.5-Minute Quadrangle, Los Angeles County, California**

**By**

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**California Department of Conservation  
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**\*Formerly with DMG, now with U.S. Geological Survey**

## **PURPOSE**

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act (the Act) of 1990 (Public Resources Code, Chapter 7.8, Division 2) directs the California Department of Conservation (DOC), Division of Mines and Geology (DMG) to delineate Seismic Hazard Zones. The purpose of the Act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use the Seismic Hazard Zone Maps in their land-use planning and permitting processes. The Act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations be performed prior to permitting most urban development projects within the hazard zones. Evaluation and mitigation of seismic hazards are to be conducted under guidelines established by the California State Mining and Geology Board (DOC, 1997; also available on the Internet <http://gmw.consrv.ca.gov/shmp/webdocs/sp117.pdf>).

This section of the evaluation report summarizes the ground motions used to evaluate liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslide potential for zoning purposes. Included are ground motion and related maps, a brief overview on how these maps were prepared, precautionary notes concerning their use, and related references. The maps provided herein are presented at a scale of approximately 1:150,000 (scale bar provided on maps),

and show the full 7.5-minute quadrangle and portions of the adjacent eight quadrangles. They can be used to assist in the specification of earthquake loading conditions *for the analysis of ground failure* according to the “Simple Prescribed Parameter Value” method (SPPV) described in the site investigation guidelines (California Department of Conservation, 1997). Alternatively, they can be used as a basis for comparing levels of ground motion determined by other methods with the statewide standard.

This section and Sections 1 and 2 (addressing liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslide hazards) constitute a report series that summarizes development of seismic hazard zone maps in the state. Additional information on seismic hazard zone mapping in California can be accessed on DMG’s Internet homepage:

<http://www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS/index.htm>

## EARTHQUAKE HAZARD MODEL

The estimated ground shaking is derived from the statewide probabilistic seismic hazard evaluation released cooperatively by the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology, and the U.S. Geological Survey (Petersen and others, 1996). That report documents an extensive 3-year effort to obtain consensus within the scientific community regarding fault parameters that characterize the seismic hazard in California. Fault sources included in the model were evaluated for long-term slip rate, maximum earthquake magnitude, and rupture geometry. These fault parameters, along with historical seismicity, were used to estimate return times of moderate to large earthquakes that contribute to the hazard.

The ground shaking levels are estimated for each of the sources included in the seismic source model using attenuation relations that relate earthquake shaking with magnitude, distance from the earthquake, and type of fault rupture (strike-slip, reverse, normal, or subduction). The published hazard evaluation of Petersen and others (1996) only considers uniform firm-rock site conditions. In this report, however, we extend the hazard analysis to include the hazard of exceeding peak horizontal ground acceleration (PGA) at 10% probability of exceedance in 50 years on spatially uniform conditions of rock, soft rock, and alluvium. These soil and rock conditions approximately correspond to site categories defined in Chapter 16 of the Uniform Building Code (ICBO, 1997), which are commonly found in California. We use the attenuation relations of Boore and others (1997), Campbell (1997), Sadigh and others (1997), and Youngs and others (1997) to calculate the ground motions.

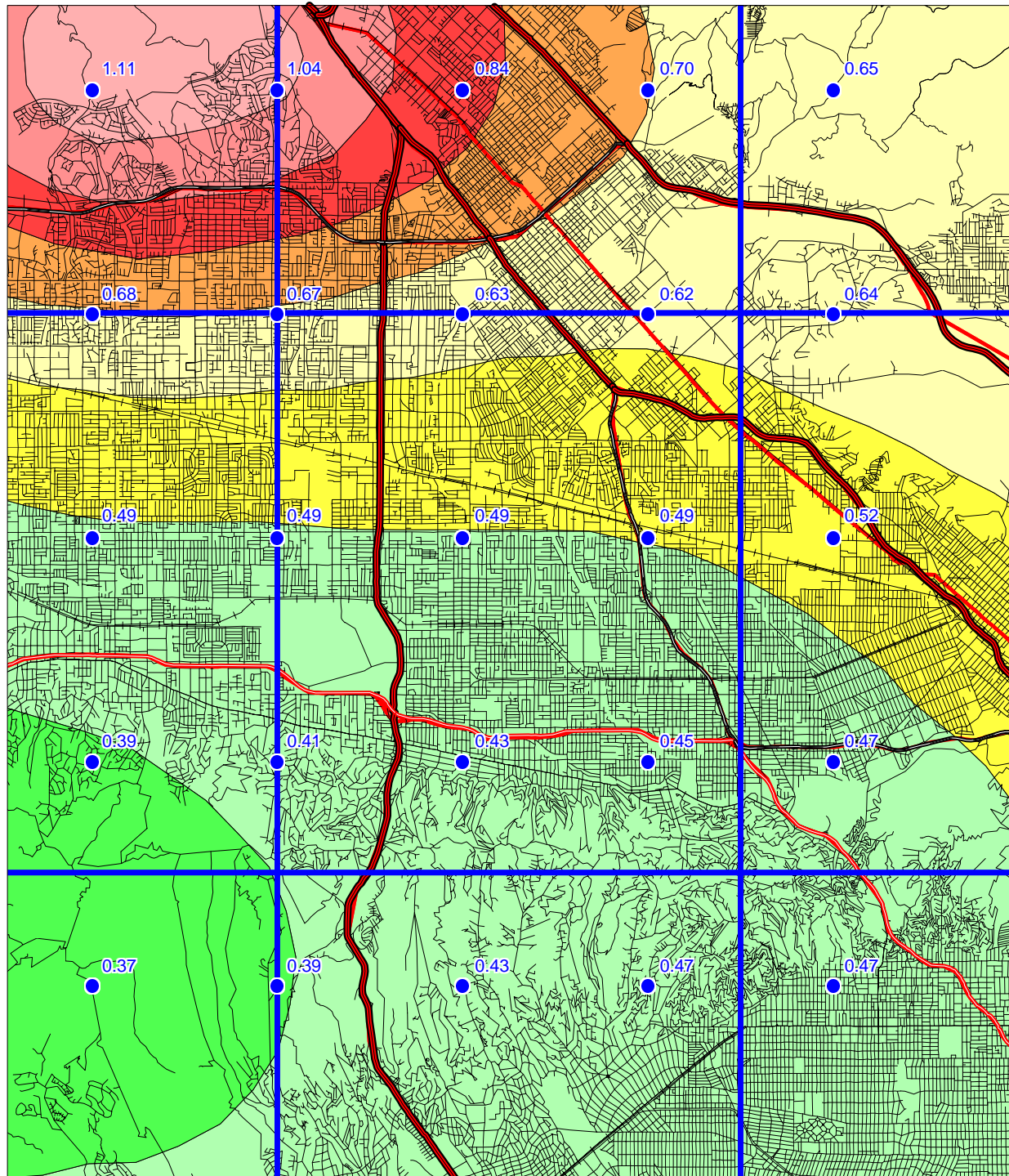
The seismic hazard maps for ground shaking are produced by calculating the hazard at sites separated by about 5 km. Figures 3.1 through 3.3 show the hazard for PGA at 10% probability of exceedance in 50 years assuming the entire map area is firm rock, soft rock, or alluvial site conditions respectively. The sites where the hazard is calculated are represented as dots and ground motion contours as shaded regions. The quadrangle of interest is outlined by bold lines and centered on the map. Portions of the eight adjacent

## VAN NUYS 7.5 MINUTE QUADRANGLE AND PORTIONS OF ADJACENT QUADRANGLES

10% EXCEEDANCE IN 50 YEARS PEAK GROUND ACCELERATION (g)

1998

**FIRM ROCK CONDITIONS**



Base map modified from MapInfo StreetWorks © 1998 MapInfo Corporation

0 2.5 5  
Kilometers

Department of Conservation  
California Geological Survey



Figure 3.1

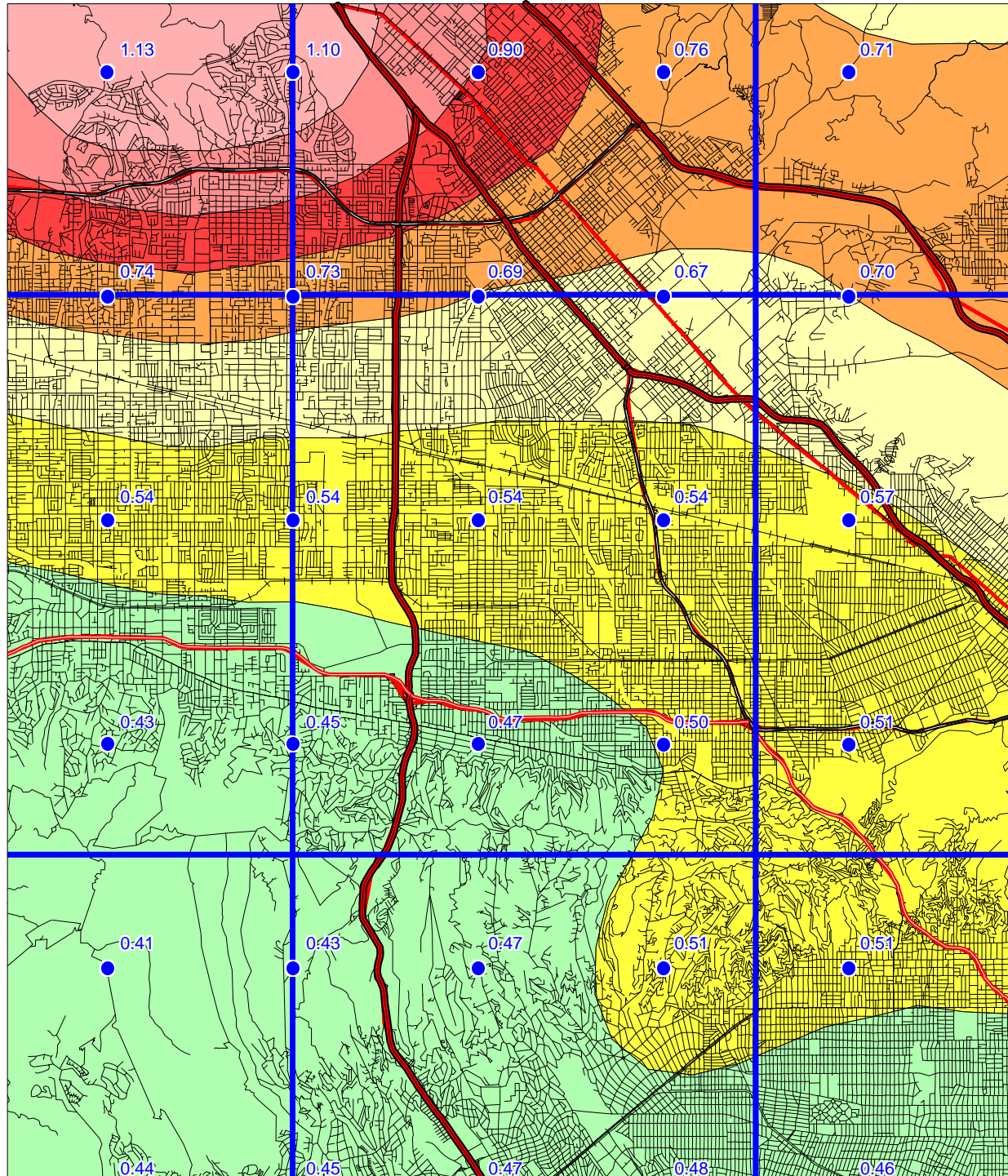


# VAN NUYS 7.5 MINUTE QUADRANGLE AND PORTIONS OF ADJACENT QUADRANGLES

10% EXCEEDANCE IN 50 YEARS PEAK GROUND ACCELERATION (g)

1998

**SOFT ROCK CONDITIONS**



Base map modified from MapInfo StreetWorks © 1998 MapInfo Corporation

0 2.5 5  
Kilometers

Department of Conservation  
California Geological Survey



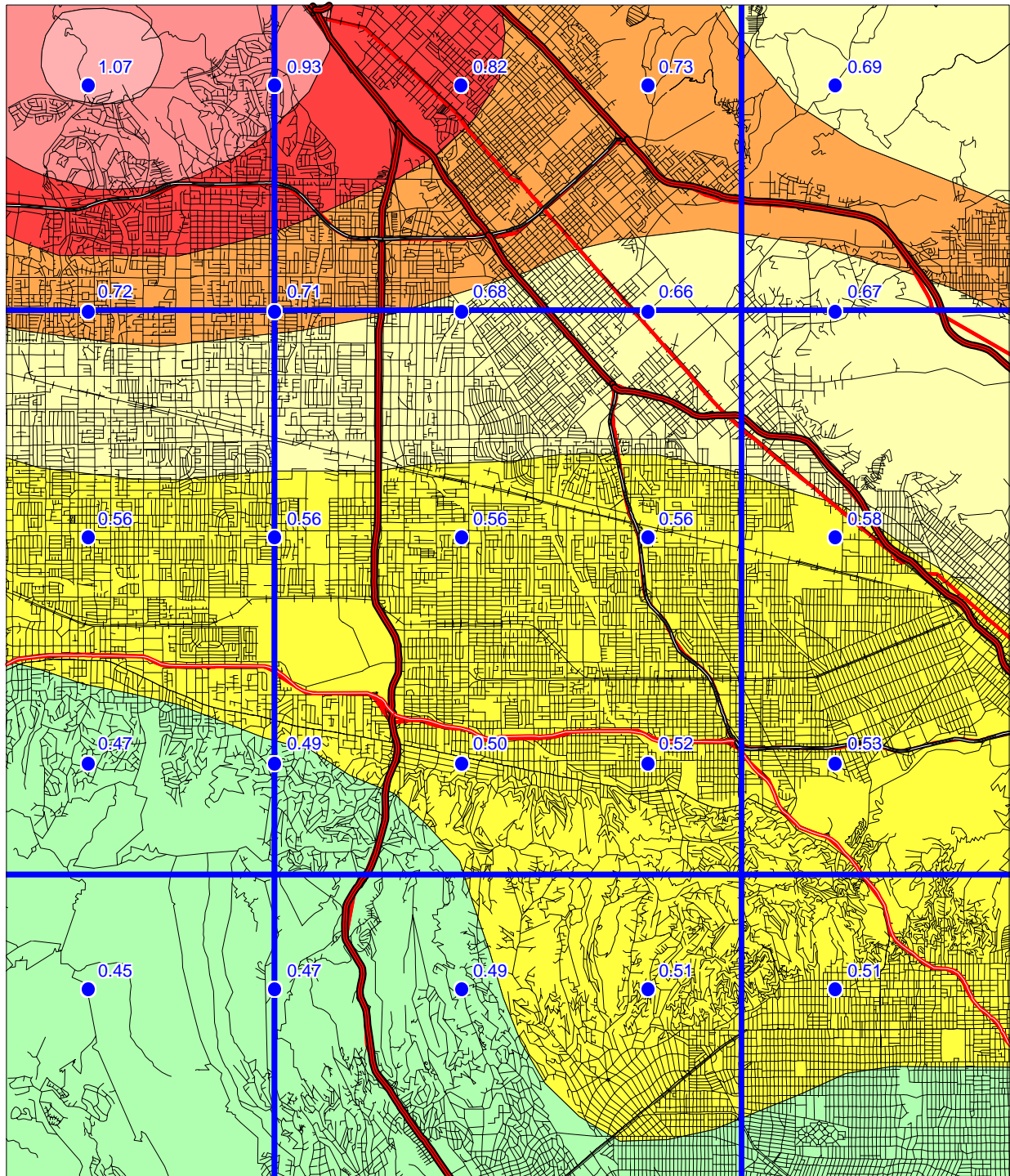
Figure 3.2

# VAN NUYS 7.5 MINUTE QUADRANGLE AND PORTIONS OF ADJACENT QUADRANGLES

10% EXCEEDANCE IN 50 YEARS PEAK GROUND ACCELERATION (g)

1998

ALLUVIUM CONDITIONS



Base map modified from MapInfo Street Works ©1998 MapInfo Corporation

0 2.5 5  
Kilometers

Department of Conservation  
California Geological Survey

Figure 3.3



quadrangles are also shown so that the trends in the ground motion may be more apparent. We recommend estimating ground motion values by selecting the map that matches the actual site conditions, and interpolating from the calculated values of PGA rather than the contours, since the points are more accurate.

### APPLICATIONS FOR LIQUEFACTION AND LANDSLIDE HAZARD ASSESSMENTS

Deaggregation of the seismic hazard identifies the contribution of each of the earthquakes (various magnitudes and distances) in the model to the ground motion hazard for a particular exposure period (see Cramer and Petersen, 1996). The map in Figure 3.4 identifies the magnitude and the distance (value in parentheses) of the earthquake that contributes most to the hazard at 10% probability of exceedance in 50 years on alluvial site conditions (*predominant earthquake*). This information gives a rationale for selecting a seismic record or ground motion level in evaluating ground failure. However, it is important to keep in mind that more than one earthquake may contribute significantly to the hazard at a site, and those events can have markedly different magnitudes and distances. For liquefaction hazard the predominant earthquake magnitude from Figure 3.4 and PGA from Figure 3.3 (alluvium conditions) can be used with the Youd and Idriss (1997) approach to estimate cyclic stress ratio demand. For landslide hazard the predominant earthquake magnitude and distance can be used to select a seismic record that is consistent with the hazard for calculating the Newmark displacement (Wilson and Keefer, 1983). When selecting the predominant earthquake magnitude and distance, it is advisable to consider the range of values in the vicinity of the site and perform the ground failure analysis accordingly. This would yield a range in ground failure hazard from which recommendations appropriate to the specific project can be made. Grid values for predominant earthquake magnitude and distance should **not** be interpolated at the site location, because these parameters are not continuous functions.

A preferred method of using the probabilistic seismic hazard model and the “simplified Seed-Idriss method” of assessing liquefaction hazard is to apply magnitude scaling probabilistically while calculating peak ground acceleration for alluvium. The result is a “magnitude-weighted” ground motion (liquefaction opportunity) map that can be used directly in the calculation of the cyclic stress ratio threshold for liquefaction and for estimating the factor of safety against liquefaction (Youd and Idriss, 1997). This can provide a better estimate of liquefaction hazard than use of predominate magnitude described above, because all magnitudes contributing to the estimate are used to weight the probabilistic calculation of peak ground acceleration (Real and others, 2000). Thus, large distant earthquakes that occur less frequently but contribute *more* to the liquefaction hazard are appropriately accounted for.

Figure 3.5 shows the magnitude-weighted alluvial PGA based on Idriss’ weighting function (Youd and Idriss, 1997). It is important to note that the values obtained from this map are pseudo-accelerations and should be used in the formula for factor of safety without any magnitude-scaling (a factor of 1) applied.

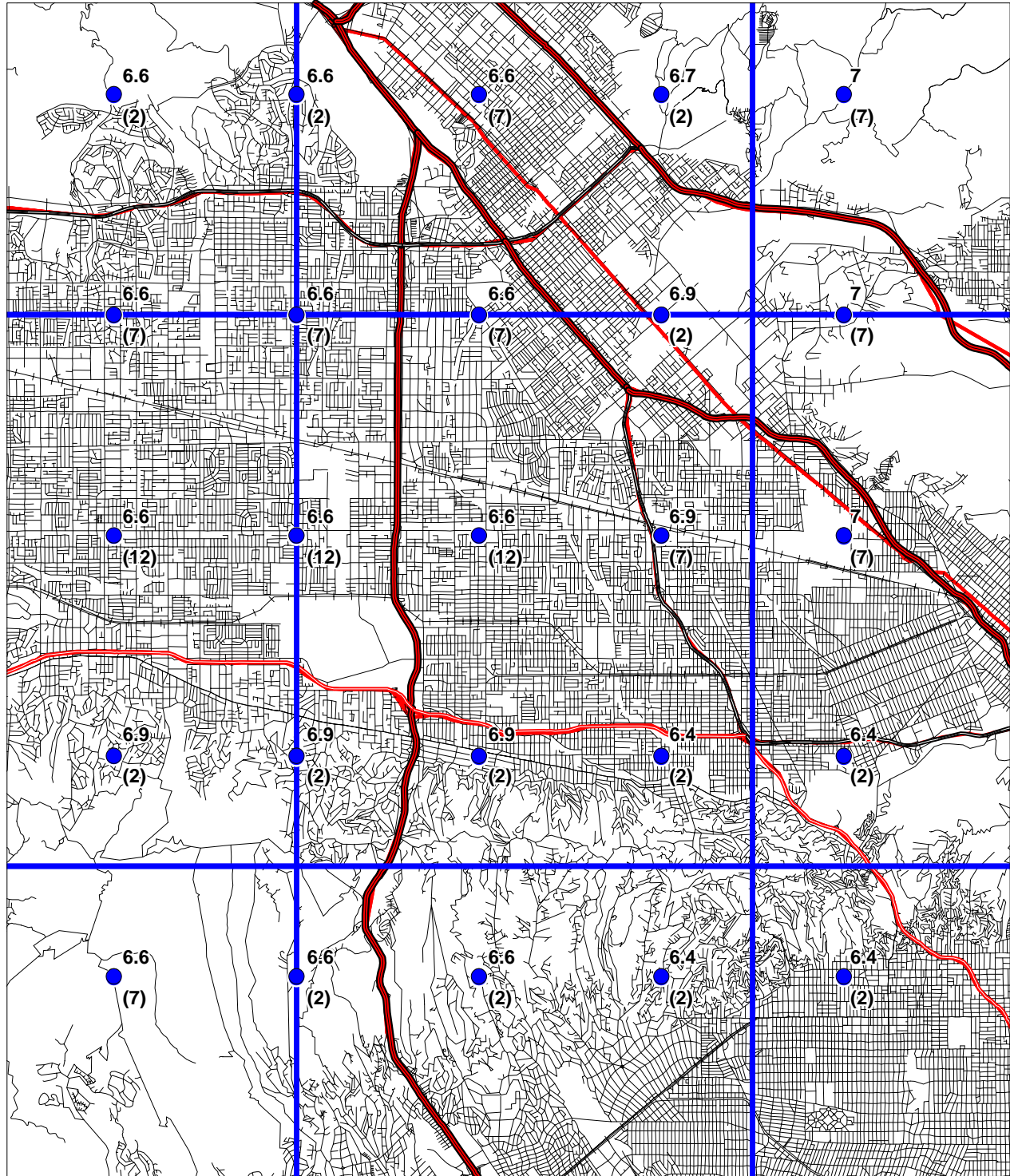


VAN NUYS 7.5 MINUTE QUADRANGLE AND PORTIONS OF  
ADJACENT QUADRANGLES

10% EXCEEDANCE IN 50 YEARS PEAK GROUND ACCELERATION

1998

## PREDOMINANT EARTHQUAKE

Magnitude (Mw)  
(Distance (km))

Base map modified from MapInfo StreetWorks ©1998 MapInfo Corporation

0 2.5 5  
KilometersDepartment of Conservation  
California Geological Survey

Figure 3.4



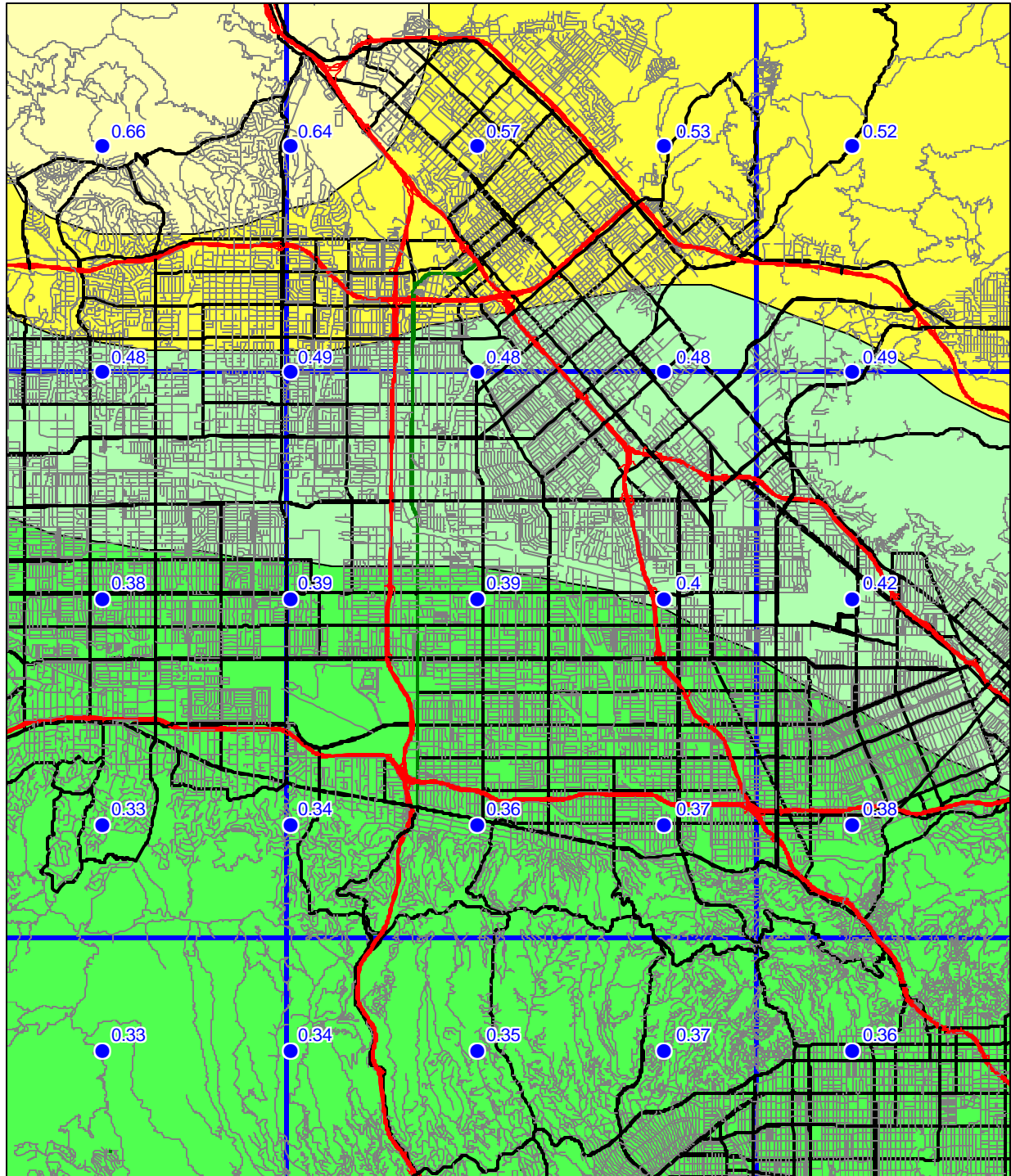


SEISMIC HAZARD EVALUATION OF THE VAN NUYS QUADRANGLE  
VAN NUYS 7.5-MINUTE QUADRANGLE AND PORTIONS OF  
ADJACENT QUADRANGLES

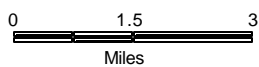
10% EXCEEDANCE IN 50 YEARS MAGNITUDE-WEIGHTED PSEUDO-PEAK ACCELERATION (g)  
FOR ALLUVIUM

1998

LIQUEFACTION OPPORTUNITY



Base map from GDT



Department of Conservation  
California Geological Survey



Figure 3.5

## USE AND LIMITATIONS

The statewide map of seismic hazard has been developed using regional information and is ***not appropriate for site specific structural design applications***. Use of the ground motion maps prepared at larger scale is limited to estimating earthquake loading conditions for preliminary assessment of ground failure at a specific location. We recommend consideration of site-specific analyses before deciding on the sole use of these maps for several reasons.

1. The seismogenic sources used to generate the peak ground accelerations were digitized from the 1:750,000-scale fault activity map of Jennings (1994). Uncertainties in fault location are estimated to be about 1 to 2 kilometers (Petersen and others, 1996). Therefore, differences in the location of calculated hazard values may also differ by a similar amount. At a specific location, however, the log-linear attenuation of ground motion with distance renders hazard estimates less sensitive to uncertainties in source location.
2. The hazard was calculated on a grid at sites separated by about 5 km (0.05 degrees). Therefore, the calculated hazard may be located a couple kilometers away from the site. We have provided shaded contours on the maps to indicate regional trends of the hazard model. However, the contours only show regional trends that may not be apparent from points on a single map. Differences of up to 2 km have been observed between contours and individual ground acceleration values. *We recommend that the user interpolate PGA between the grid point values rather than simply using the shaded contours.*
3. Uncertainties in the hazard values have been estimated to be about +/- 50% of the ground motion value at two standard deviations (Cramer and others, 1996).
4. Not all active faults in California are included in this model. For example, faults that do not have documented slip rates are not included in the source model. Scientific research may identify active faults that have not been previously recognized. Therefore, future versions of the hazard model may include other faults and omit faults that are currently considered.
5. A map of the predominant earthquake magnitude and distance is provided from the deaggregation of the probabilistic seismic hazard model. However, it is important to recognize that a site may have more than one earthquake that contributes significantly to the hazard. Therefore, in some cases earthquakes other than the predominant earthquake should also be considered.

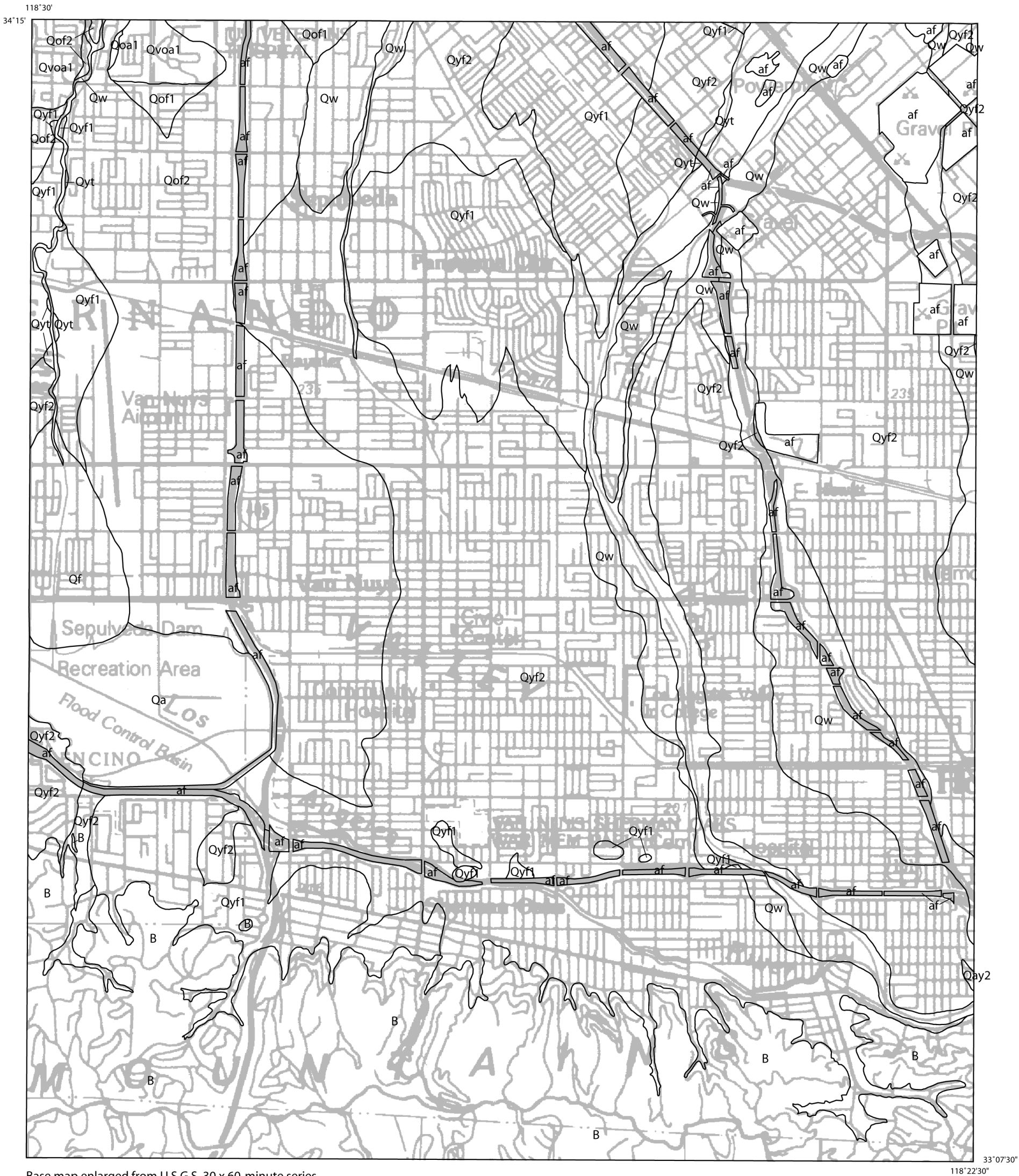
Because of its simplicity, it is likely that the SPPV method (DOC, 1997) will be widely used to estimate earthquake shaking loading conditions for the evaluation of ground failure hazards. It should be kept in mind that ground motions at a given distance from an earthquake will vary depending on site-specific characteristics such as geology, soil properties, and topography, which may not have been adequately accounted for in the regional hazard analysis. Although this variance is represented to some degree by the

recorded ground motions that form the basis of the hazard model used to produce Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3, extreme deviations can occur. More sophisticated methods that take into account other factors that may be present at the site (site amplification, basin effects, near source effects, etc.) should be employed as warranted. The decision to use the SPPV method with ground motions derived from Figures 3.1, 3.2, or 3.3 should be based on careful consideration of the above limitations, the geotechnical and seismological aspects of the project setting, and the “importance” or sensitivity of the proposed building with regard to occupant safety.

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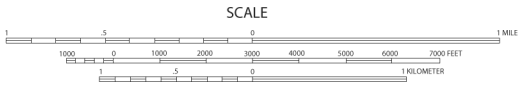
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Base map enlarged from U.S.G.S. 30 x 60-minute series

VAN NUYS QUADRANGLE



B = Pre-Quaternary bedrock.  
See "Bedrock and Surficial Geology" in Section 1 of report for descriptions of units.

Plate 1.1 Quaternary Geologic Map of the Van Nuys 7.5-Minute Quadrangle.

